

BENTON PARISH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, March 6, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.

Benton Town Hall

105 Sibley Street

Benton, LA 71006

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Martha Reyenga

Steve Vercher

Brian Kauffer

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Michael Jorgenson

Jerry Nuckolls

OTHERS PRESENT:

Carlotta Askew Brown

Carolina Zet Blunck

Jayne Gilmour

Pat Doane

Dwayne Gates

Micha Duffy

(A) Martha Reyenga called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

(B) The invocation was led by Brian Kauffer.

(C) Pledge of Allegiance was led by Steve Vercher.

(D) Jayne Gilmour called roll and stated a quorum was present.

(E) A motion was made by Steve Vercher and seconded by Brian Kauffer to approve the agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

(F) PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **BP-04-23** - The application of Coyle Engineering, requesting a Zoning Amendment to change the zoning classification of a tract of land being 8.94 acres, more or less, from R-A (Residence Agriculture District) to B-3 (Community and Central Business District) located in the northeast quarter of Section 23, Township 20 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, Louisiana for a proposed development, North Cypress Resort and RV Storage. (Police Jury District 3)

Dwayne Gates was present.

Gates: I am the property owner. The planned development is an RV park. This would allow people to come in for a short term, 30 days or less. There is a house on the property. It will be converted to an office / retail. If it goes well, we would keep developing that area. We are looking at developing a climate control building that was not on the original plot on the storage side. I was going to do 45-foot covered RV parking but there is a need for some climate control storage.

Vercher: Everything out there is residential with the exception of the storage. I have a problem with the short-term rental concept and people coming in and out. This could turn into long term, short term place to live. In my office, there are two people that live in a KOA. It is a very affordable place to live. I am concerned with the residents not taking this favorably with people coming in and out all the time. You have 9 acres. If you put 2 people in every structure, you will have so many people concentrated in that one area. That residential area is not set up for that.

Gates: Do you think it would be better in town?

Vercher: I think it would be better if you had lake access. If you were next to a boat launch or if you had a boat launch, and if you had more room to not be so concentrated, it would be better. You are stacked in there like a parking lot.

Gates: Actually, we did include a few wider spaces compared to some other RV parks.

Vercher: I am just going to tell you everything I do not like about this project. I see you have DOTD on board with looking at the state permit. You have a 22-foot-wide drive. That is just two 11-foot lanes. It is not enough to pull in and pull out. You are going to have a pinch point pulling these big trailers. This is an RV Trailer park. The trailers are just 10 feet off the property line. There's no place for a buffer. These are all things that I anticipate coming up in our next meeting when you are in front of your neighbors.

Gates: I visit a lot of RV parks and the majority of them look just like this.

Kauffer: I saw the email correspondence with the state. I did not see a response to that email.

Micha Duffy was present.

Duffy: I have not followed up with that email.

Kauffer: I know roughly where this is. I know there is a hill there. I am wondering if there are any line of sight issues.

Gates: It is a long way from that hill for that to be an issue.

Kauffer: Will they come in through that one drive and actually be able to get in to those spots? How will they turn around?

Gates: It is designed so that when you come in, you can do a pull through or you can back up.

Vercher: Micha, you did this with auto turn? So, you have all of your radiuses and axel types and you know you can fit these in there?

Reyenga: When you know someone is coming in with a 40-foot trailer, will they be able to come in when spots 1 through 7 are full? Will they will be able pull in and then back up to 4, 5 or 6?

Kauffer: Is there swing enough to pull through and then get out?

Micha: We did the auto turn on those and thought about all different ways of getting people in and out. There are some spots where you can not leave your trailer hooked up. You would need to disengage from your vehicle.

Vercher: This is just too small. You need a big area. You'll need a sewer system. You will need a detention pond and someone to operate it. I am not against your project. It is just too dense. You have a very tight spot.

Reyenga: Where will you discharge the waste out here.

Duffy: There will be a central line. Right now, there is little treatment plant there.

Kauffer: With the shorter spots.... The smaller travel trailers....

Duffy: Those will probably be limited to the all-in-one campers.

Kauffer: The space will be wide enough for the slides?

Duffy: A travel lane on a highway would be 12. We will have 14 feet there. That should be plenty.

Reyenga: Some have slides on both sides now.

Kauffer: I anticipate your neighbors main concerns to be the treatment of the sewer, the coming in and out of there, and just being next to it in general.

Reyenga: What about the second home that is on the property?

Gates: It is gone. It was an old mobile home.

Vercher: How do you feel about your neighbors? How do you think this will go when we put this on the agenda?

Gates: I have no idea. I have looked at some very nice RV parks. When I started the storage in 1998, everyone said it would not work.

Vercher: We are not against storage.

Gates: Just because someone says no, it doesn't mean that it won't work.

Vercher: We are not saying no. We make a recommendation to the Police Jury. We are just trying to prompt you for what problems may come up when we have a packed room.

Reyenga: I think you are going to have a lot of resistance when the people within 300 feet get their letter about this.

Vercher: We tell you this because we have had some good projects and the residents fight it. Most of those projects don't pan out.

Kauffer: What are your thoughts on fencing?

Gates: We talked about it. I thought about putting a wood fence from the road beyond that house and the go chain link beyond that. I want it to be nice. My plan was to have concrete pads and make it very nice. If the neighbors are against it, then I will not do it. I am not set on it. There's plenty of storage that needs to be built.

Reyenga: Are you planning on someone managing this 24 hours a day?

Gates: I would have someone there during business hours.

Vercher: The 10-foot buffer on the sides, it won't shield that at all from the people on the sides of you. There is not enough room for a tree line. You can't forget about all of the garbage trucks that will have to get in and out of there. The fire equipment will need to fit in there. You will probably need a letter from the Fire Chief.

Reyenga: Is the land on the backside where the creek is low?

Duffy: It falls to the creek, rises a little bit, and then falls off to the back.

Reyenga: It eventually will go toward that ditch on the other side of the two residents going out further east.

Duffy: It is odd shaped right there. I thought it would make its way to the lake but it will run off to that ditch behind those two homes.

Gates: I was looking to do a 20 x 20. I haven't picked anything out. I want it to be nice, similar to what they have done in Blanchard.

Vercher: You will need to go to the State Fire Marshall with those. They are commercial buildings.

Duffy: I am making notes. We can also visit some RV places to see what the maximum width would need to be.

Gates: If we need to eliminate some spots to make room for that, we can.

Vercher: We just want you to be ready for some of the questions we anticipate having in the next meeting.

Gates: If it looks there will be opposition at the next meeting and it is likely that the board would not be in favor of this, can I get an approval for the building out there to be an office and get the approval for climate control storage?

Vercher: I am speaking for just myself. I would be ok if you applied this fee to another idea. I want him to get his money's worth if he is going to the Police Jury. I think that we can work with you on the fee that you have already paid.

Doane: Legally, we will need to be sure that we keep separate public hearings if plans change. That is just a legal thing. You do have to have separate advertising, separate plans, and a separate hearing. I do not have a say in the fees part of this.

As there were no further comments from the Board or the public, the Chairman called for a motion.

A motion to approve the application for a public hearing was made by Vercher and seconded by Kauffer.

A roll call vote was held and the motion carried unanimously.

(G) PRELIMINARY HEARINGS

(H) REGULAR MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes
 - a. A motion to approve the February 6, 2023 minutes was made by Kauffer and seconded by Vercher.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Old Business

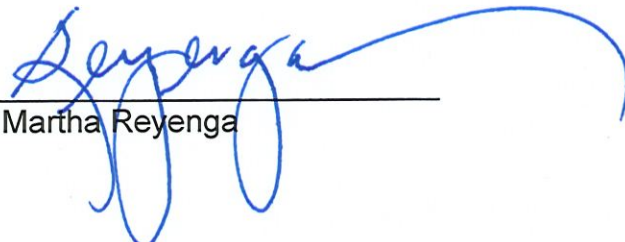
Askew-Brown handed out maps that Pat Doane has been working on to show lot sizes in the Town of Benton and five miles outside of the town limits.

3. New Business

Askew-Brown indicated that her and Carolina Blunck will not be at the next meeting, April 3, 2023 due to a planning conference in Philadelphia.

4. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm.



Martha Reyenga